



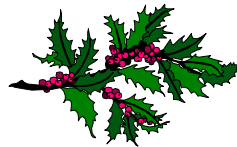
# THE BULLETIN

The amenity society for  
Putney & Roehampton

December 2010



**Season's Greetings and Happy New Year**  
**to all our members from Anthony Marshall &**  
**Carolyn McMillan (President & Chair) and all other**  
**officers of the Putney Society; we hope you have an**  
**enjoyable festive season. May we all return to the**  
**fray in 2011 with renewed energy to continue the**  
**Society's work to make Putney & Roehampton**  
**better places to live.**



## Members' Meetings

**Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> Nov. 7.30 pm, Brewer Building**

### 'Putney at the Crossroads'

*Martin Howell*, Group Planner in the Council's Planning Service, will speak about the progress of, and consultation on, the LDF (Local Development Framework), followed by a Q&A session. For full details, see the November Bulletin.

**Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> January 2011 7.30 pm**

### Wandsworth Museum, West Hill

The beautiful new café in *Wandsworth Museum* will host our Members' Meeting on the evening of Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> January 2011, starting at 7.30 pm. *Ken Barbour*, the new Director, will speak about the Museum's collections, its education services, its plans for the future and its growing role in the community. Members who attend will have free access to the Museum for the evening and the

chance to ask Ken any questions they might have about the exhibits and its collections. Members of the Friends of Wandsworth Museum will also be present to speak about their activities in support of the Museum. The Museum is always on the lookout for volunteers. Capacity will be restricted to 50 people, so please let Jonathan Callaway know in advance if you wish to attend:

**email: [callahiljo@ukonline.co.uk](mailto:callahiljo@ukonline.co.uk)**

**mobile: 07768-907672**

### 'Colour Supplement'

We hope you enjoy the supplement, which should appeal to members interested in our local history. This is, for the moment, a one-off, and we can't promise them on a regular basis. Nevertheless, we would like to get your reactions, and any ideas for innovations to the Bulletin, or changes or additions to the activities of the Society as a whole.

**Forthcoming Society Events: dates for your diary**

Tuesday	30 November	Members' Meeting - LDF (p.1 & Nov. Bulletin)
Friday	3 December	Putney Christmas Market (page 4)
Saturday	11 December	Xmas Lunch: Sally's@St Mary's (page 4)
Thursday	27 January 2011	Members' Meeting - Wandsworth Museum (p.1)

**Your letters**

The views expressed by members are the individual's own and not necessarily the views of the Society. As we may receive more letters than we have space for, letters should be concise. Long letters may have to be edited.

bulletin@putneysociety.org.uk  
or philipevison@btinternet.com

**WBC (Website, Bulletin, Christmas!)**

Dear Sir,

Three winners in one month!!

An outstanding new website - full of colour, vibrancy and imagination, telling an excellent story of Putney and Roehampton, and the Society's role in the community.

A new colour heading for the Bulletin, and excellent interior colour - means the Bulletin is setting a new high standard in audience appeal. Thanks to our Editor, Phil Evison.

And a special Christmas treat - an excellent, appetising lunch on 11<sup>th</sup> December, set up by Nick Austin. Sadly, I have to miss this one but I will put my name down for 2011. I am sure its success will be repeated!!

Thanks to the Executive Committee and very best wishes to the Society for Christmas and 2011.

John Ewing, Wimbledon Parkside [former Chairman]

**Putney Past**

Dear Sir,

I recently came across the 1932 edition of Kelly's directory of Putney & Roehampton, which I found interesting, with a full street list of occupants and a complete alphabetical list of residents, including a surprising number of Armenians. 'Misses' feature prominently - maybe unmarried sisters living together, as so many soldiers were killed in the First World War. Professional men were well represented, e.g. doctors, lawyers etc, and a fair number of retired naval officers.

Two notable names were, at 33 Putney Hill, **Sir Oswald Stoll** (1866-1942), the theatre and film magnate and, at 60A Upper Richmond Rd, **Commander Charles Lightoller** (1874-1952), the most senior officer to survive the 1912 Titanic disaster and portrayed many times on the screen, notably by Kenneth More in the 1958 film **A Night to Remember**. Decorated for gallantry in WW1, he also assisted in the 1940 Dunkirk evacuation in WW2.

Putney High Street had a good range of shops but only three remain today - **Boots** (1907), **W H Smith** (1922), and **Milletts**. Shops that have closed include **ABC, W Barratt, Cuff & Co, Cullen, Dewhurst, Dolcis, Dorothy Perkins, Dunn & Co, Eastman, Firmston (coal merchants), Freeman Hardy & Willis, Hastings, Home & Colonial, Jerome (photographers), A Lewis, Lilley & Skinner, Lipton, J Lyons, Mac Fisheries, Maypole Dairy, Meakers, Montague Burton, John Perring, Rego, Saxones, Singer Sewing Machines, A J Smith, J & M Stone, T Walton, Woolworths and Zeeta (confectioners)**.

I am sure that these names will bring back memories to many members.

Clive Atkins, St John's Avenue

**Buy once, give twice at the Cards for Good Causes Multi-Charity Christmas Shop**

Charity cards are a great way to buy once and give twice - once to the person you send the card to and again to your favourite charity.

There is still time to purchase your Charity Christmas Cards from the Putney 'Cards for Good Causes' Multi-Charity Christmas Card Shop located under the Tower of St Mary's Church in Putney. The shop is open daily from 10.00 am to 4.30 pm, with Sunday opening from 1.00 to 5.00 pm on 5<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> December. It will stay open late on Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> December until 7.30 pm. The shop will close at 4.30 pm on Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> December (last day).

For details of other UK locations visit:

[www.cardsforcharity.co.uk](http://www.cardsforcharity.co.uk)

**Look out for the red triangular Santa sign!**

Angela Holman, Genoa Avenue

**Thames Tideway Tunnel**

You will find a flyer with this Bulletin, setting out the Society's position and our reservations, particularly with respect to the proposed Barn Elms site and the possibility of increased traffic and other disruption associated with the planned Putney Bridge site.

We welcome your comments - to the email address in the panel above left, or to either of those on the flyer.

**Breaking News!**

**Justine Greening MP has organised a public meeting with Thames Water on Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> December at 8.00 pm, in St Mary's Church. All welcome!**



### News from the Panels

**Members are invited to attend panel meetings and raise issues they feel need to be discussed.**

## Open Spaces Panel

Convenor: Hugh Thompson (020 8788 8771)

### Putney Lower Common

The Commons Conservators generally do a good job in difficult circumstances and the Common has maintained its unique atmosphere of a wild environment, supporting numerous small mammals and birds without interference from the outside world, other than a low-key maintenance régime. However, there is one aspect of the Common which causes walkers a problem and that is the path leading from the disused graveyard into the large common, keeping the active graveyard on your right. In winter, this path almost always becomes waterlogged, leading to a network of smaller paths veering off the main track.

The Panel will be asking the Conservators whether an environmentally-friendly solution to this perennial problem can be contrived. The objective would be to allow a permanent, informal path to be maintained, summer and winter, avoiding the quagmire which develops after any wet patch of weather. The enhanced section need not be more than 25 yards long and should retain all the natural characteristics of the other paths, whilst resisting the worst ravages of a bad winter. This may be easier said than done, but with all their experience on Wimbledon Common we believe it should be possible and would be welcomed by the majority of walkers. We will report back in the next bulletin on the result of our request.

## Community Panel

Convenor: Position currently vacant

**We welcome volunteers as convenor and/or deputies!**

### Libraries

A report in the Evening Standard of 10<sup>th</sup> November was headlined “**130 libraries in the capital face axe in spending cuts.**” Wandsworth, one of the boroughs mentioned, said it would consult on two options: shut 6 of its 11 libraries, or close one and slash the opening hours of the other 10. In our view, this would be a catastrophe and, though we understand the economic imperatives, we feel that all the resources of the borough, the Society and local residents should be marshalled to prevent this happening.

## Buildings Panel

Convenor: John Horrocks (020 8789 2956)

### Tall buildings - what's going on?

Proposals for tall buildings - all in Upper Richmond Rd - have been mushrooming in recent months and have kept the Panel very busy. First an 11-storey hotel proposed for the Tote House site at Woodlands Way/Oakhill Rd, then a 15-storey scheme at Putney Place, opposite East Putney Station, a new Tileman House proposal for a 12-storey block (just before Putney Hill) ... and now the Capsticks site, next to East Putney Station, with two proposed blocks of 9 & 15 storeys. Generally, these proposals would double the height of the present buildings. And the council is envisaging other sites for tall buildings such as Sainsburys in Werter Road, the telephone exchange in Montserrat Road, the TKMaxx/Halfords site between Lacy and Felsham Roads etc. What is curious is that Putney residents (and Cllr. Edward Lister, the council Leader) have made it clear over recent years that they do not want tall buildings in Putney. So why is the council encouraging developers to propose them?

Come to our special Members' Meeting on this issue in the Brewer Building at 7.30 pm on Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> November to hear about the council's policies to change Putney this way. Is it what you want for Putney?

## Transport Panel

Convenor: Jonathan Callaway (07768 907672)

### 20 mph Consultation

Cllr. Ravi Govindia announced the preliminary results of the two consultations: a substantial majority in favour of 20 mph speed limits in the Dover House Estate but a much slimmer majority in West Putney. In both cases, there were also slim majorities in favour of the traffic-calming proposals made by the council, i.e. speed bumps on certain roads. We now await the council's detailed plans for both schemes. The Society had supported the consultations but has urged the council to reconsider the extent of traffic-calming measures.

### NEW CONVENOR SOUGHT!

Your convenor has been running the Panel for 3½ years and has recently taken on new commitments, leaving him with too little time to continue this role. A successor is urgently needed and he or she should ideally step forward before Christmas, so we can complete the transition in the New Year. No unreasonable offer will be refused!

### NEXT PANEL MEETINGS

Buildings	Dec 9	Thursday	7 Dealtry Road	7.30 pm
	Jan 13 (2011)	Thursday	21 Pentlow Street	7.30 pm
Transport	Dec 7	Tuesday	10 Luttrell Avenue	7.30 pm
	Jan 11 (2011)	Tuesday	10 Luttrell Avenue	7.30 pm
Open Spaces	Dec 2	Thursday	54 Festing Road	8.15 pm
	Jan 6 (2011)	Thursday	54 Festing Road	8.15 pm
Community	Dec ??		[depending on when	
	Jan ?? (2011)		this panel is revived]	



### The Putney Railway Garden

Michael Valentine lived in Putney most of his adult life, was a member of Putney Rowing Club and an occasional rail user, preferring to use one of his open-top cars to commute into the City, where he ran SJ Warburg's corporate finance department. He died in 2007. His wife Shirley (yes, Valentine!) and two of his three children still live in Putney. One of his daughters, Jo (Baroness Valentine, Chief Executive of London First) noticed the weed-infested patches between Platforms 2 and 3, and had the idea of turning them into a memorial garden for her father. Through her job at London First she knew management at Network Rail and Southwest Trains, and both companies were extremely helpful and positive about the idea.



She enlisted friend and garden designer Diana Ward to plan the planting, the Boat Race theme emerging from the connection between Michael's rowing and Putney's being the start of the race. Michael's old college at Cambridge (Corpus) kindly donated a redundant four for the garden. There was a nice symmetry about that, because at one point, Michael had given them a modern eight. This boat was delivered by train one night, giving rise to the headline 'The next train at Platform Two will be... a boat'!

The planting was originally done in the summer of 2009, with help from Anna O'Connor, the Customer Relations Manager at Network Rail, and colleagues, who not only organised the preparation of the beds but also gave up weekends to dig and plant. The SW Trains station staff have also been extremely helpful. The second boat came from Regents Park College, Oxford, and was 'planted' a little later. Michael's son James runs a freight business and organised a more conventional delivery by truck.

There have been teething troubles - the prostrate rosemary in the original planting died in the 2009/10 snows and was replaced by periwinkle - but many passengers express their appreciation when they see members of the family watering, weeding and rubbing their painful backs! But there are also less garden-minded passengers who trample the plants when they get off their trains ...

Volunteers willing to help with weeding or watering would be very welcome! [Contact the Society.]

### Stuck for Christmas Present Ideas?

The Society's recently reprinted '*Putney & Roehampton - A Brief History*' makes an ideal gift. Expanded, updated and with lots of new photographs, it deserves a place on the bookshelves of every resident of the borough. Educational for the kids too! £7.50, or £10.00 for two. Send a cheque (payable to The Putney Society) to Hugh Thompson, 54 Festing Road, SW15 1LP - or buy at the Market [below].

### Putney Christmas Market Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> December

2.30-7.30 pm. At 3.00 pm: children's choirs and lantern procession by local schools; 5.30 pm: switching on of lights by a celebrity; 6.15 pm live music on sound stage. Bouncy castle, carousel etc. Stalls include handmade jewellery, stained glass, flowers, doggy products, craft workshops and sizzling food. The Society will also have a stall.

Another chance to look at a selection of some of the best paintings of local scenes by local artists incl. Gurley, Dick Bates and Julianna Franchetti (tbc). The works will be for sale in aid of the PSAD (the new roof still needs to be paid for) and there will be a £1 raffle for one of the works.

### Christmas Lunch - Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> December

Last chance to book for our annual Christmas Lunch! Nick Austin, has arranged an enticing Xmas lunch at Sally's in the Brewer Building, next to St Mary's Church, Putney Bridge. Space doesn't permit full details but the menu is mouth-watering, with choices of three each starters, mains and puds, and veggie options for the first two. The price includes a welcome glass of mulled wine and coffee/tea + mince pie to finish. **Arrive 12.00-12.30 for lunch at 1.00. Cost £25/person.** Other drinks to be arranged individually; house wine is attractively priced at £10 a bottle.

Please send bookings to Nicholas Austin, 91 Chelverton Road, London SW15 1RW, with SAE and cheque payable to The Putney Society. You will receive a ticket with menu choices for advance selection, to speed service on the day.

[For last-minute bookings, contact Philip Evison.]

### We welcome the following new members:

**Alan Bergin**, Bangalore Street; **Brian Bertscher**, Ruvigny Mansions; **John Cross**, Rotherwood Road; **R A Fleming-Williams**, Woodborough Road; **Jane Holland**, Inner Park Road SW19; **Thelma Jackson**, Enmore Road; **Keith Marsden**, Seaton Close; **Joan Roberts**, Tunworthy Crescent; **John Symes**, Wildcroft Manor Road.

### Putney Society Officers:

<b>Chair</b>	<b>Carolyn McMillan</b>	<b>38 Disraeli Road, SW15 2DS</b>	<b>0208 789 6692</b>
<b>Membership</b>	<b>Bob Bowmer*</b>	<b>17 Felsham Road, SW15 1AY</b>	<b>07793 296733</b>
<b>Bulletin Editor</b>	<b>Philip Evison</b>	<b>3 John Clynes Court, SW15 6PU</b>	<b>0208 246 5885</b>
<b>Acting Social Secretary</b>	<b>Philip Evison (contact details as above, email on page 2)</b>		

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**website: <http://www.putneysociety.org.uk> \*email: [membership@putneysociety.org.uk](mailto:membership@putneysociety.org.uk)**



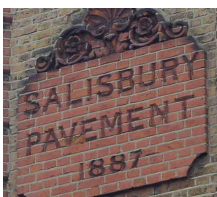
# The Bulletin Colour Supplement

## “Take a walk on the ... High Street”

### Lower Richmond Rd



The 17<sup>th</sup> C (or earlier?) *White Lion (Lyon)*, next to the *Red Lion*, was one of our oldest inns - also the venue for an annual community gathering and sessions of the ‘General Court Baron’ (manor court). The present building dates from 1887. Since: *Slug & Lettuce*, *Litten Tree*, *Walkabout*, and currently *Wahoo*.



Putney’s (and *one* of London’s) first *Boot’s* opened here in 1907, replacing the *London & County Bank* [see p.2 col.2]. Since: *TSB*, *Agora Amusements*.



### Norroy Road



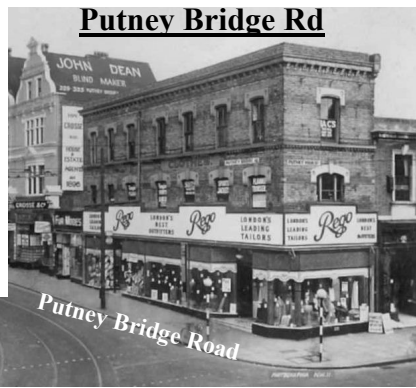
There has been a *St Mary’s* church on the site since at least the 13<sup>th</sup> century. Thomas Cromwell’s sister Katherine was married here in 1494 and, of course, the *Putney Debates* took place here in 1647 during the English Civil War; Oliver Cromwell was Thomas’s G-G-G-nephew. Sadly, the church was extensively damaged by fire in 1974, though the 15<sup>th</sup> century tower survived.

### Brewhouse Lane



Walter Cromwell (Thomas’s father) owned a brewery and hostelry here in the late 15<sup>th</sup> century, though probably nearer the river than this 17<sup>th</sup>/18<sup>th</sup> C *Castle*, on the corner of Putney Bridge Road. This was demolished in 1938 and its successor destroyed in the Blitz in 1941, with the loss of app. 50 lives. The last (1959) *Castle* on the site was demolished in 2003, to make way for part of the Putney Wharf complex.

### Putney High Street



This did not, as some believe, house the *Black & White Milk Bar* and *Cinderella Dance Hall*; *Rego Tailors/Clothiers* were at 31 High Street 1918-43. On the R of the photo at no. 33 is *Meakers Ltd, Hosiers* (1936-43); no. 35 (now *Blockbuster Video*) became the *Black & White Milk Bar* c.1934/8. On the first floor, above nos. 33-35, was the *Mouncey & Ryde Billiard Hall* (1927-??), probably converted to the *Cinderella Dance Hall* during the war. No. 35 (*CDH & BWMB*) took a direct hit from a ‘Stabo’ HE bomb on 7<sup>th</sup> November 1943 - the greatest single loss of life in Putney in WW2, with 81 dead and 248 injured.



*Fairfax House*, one of the last survivors of Putney’s many ‘great houses’, was built in the 1630s (straddling the present Montserrat Road - *TopShop, BHS* etc) and extended c. 1700. It passed to the Pettiward family and survived until 1887, when a campaign to save it foundered. Another was *Essex House*, just south of the present Werter Road. Only one now remains - the early 18<sup>th</sup> century *Winchester House* on Lower Richmond Road, currently the *Winchester House Club*.



The *Assembly Rooms*, on the first floor of 113 High St (*W H Smith* since 1922), could be seen as Putney’s first, although not purpose-built, cinema. Launched as *The Prince’s Picture Theatre* in 1910, it pre-dated the purpose-built *Mirror Theatre, Putney Electric Palace* and *Electric Pavilion* by up to a year.

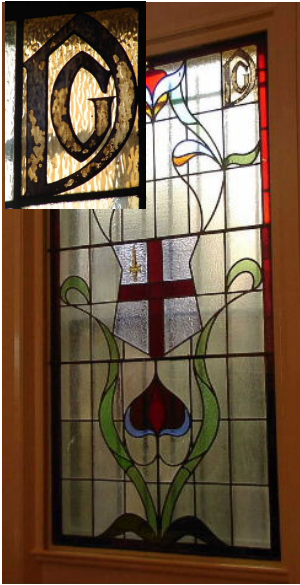
### Werter Road

Opposite, in the 1880s, two of the last great houses, *Gordon House & The Lawn*, would go and Norroy & Chelverton Roads, with *Salisbury Pavement* between, be built. The latter, named after the then PM, was ‘opened’ in 1887 and commemorated by busts, above the shops, of Lord Salisbury and Disraeli. They are still there today (four of each), though a couple are badly weathered. Salisbury on the L, Disraeli on the R.



### Disraeli Road

No space for photographs but note the former *Post Office* (1874-1961) [see p.2], the *Library* (1899) and quirky *Violet Villa* (1896) at no. 51.



### Window on the Past

During the refurbishment of the Trinity Hospice shop at 147 High Street in August & September this year, a stained-glass window was uncovered, doing the same for a bit of Putney's past, namely one of a chain of tailor's shops owned by George Doland, a local politician, later Mayor of Wandsworth and MP for Balham & Tooting.

Lt-Col George Frederick Doland OBE (1<sup>st</sup> May 1872-26<sup>th</sup> Nov 1946) was born in Wandsworth and became a merchant tailor, opening a chain of shops, originally in SW London, and entering local politics in 1912, when he was elected as a Municipal Reform Party member of WBC for Balham Ward. He served on Wandsworth Council for almost 25 years, and was elected as Mayor of Wandsworth for 1928-29 and 1933-34.

In 1936, he was selected as Conservative candidate for the by-election in Balham & Tooting, following the resignation of Sir Alfred Butt and - unopposed by the other coalition parties and hence in a straight fight with Labour's W G Miller - was returned with a majority of 2,070, continuing as MP for 9 years. Elections were cancelled on the outbreak of WW2 and the next general election was not called until 1945. As he was over 70 years old, Doland chose to retire from parliament. He died in 1946, aged 74, from complications following an operation and was cremated at Putney Vale Cemetery.

Until 1911, 145-7 High St comprised T Treharne & Co, Drapers. Doland opened his first two shops c. 1910, in High Rd & Bedford Hill, Balham, but by 1914, the Putney High St shop (now just 147) was in his name. By 1939, he had additional shops in Victoria St & Whitehall SW1, Streatham High Rd SW18, Clapham High St SW4, Cricklewood Broadway NW2 & Cheapside EC2. In 1947 (the year after his death), these were down to five, for obvious reasons, but were soon back up to seven! Doland and his successors were clearly successful, and his PHS shop was still there until the late 70s. Trinity Hospice took over from K-Shoes (now Clarks) in 2002 - but were there others in-between?



The above 1904 postcard pre-dates Doland and the shop outlined is probably Treharne's. Opposite, on the corner of Norroy Rd, is London & County Banking Co. Ltd (since at least 1888), replaced by Boots three years later. The bank probably then moved to the SW corner of Upper Richmond Rd & Putney Hill (now Russell-Cooke Solicitors).



This postcard probably dates from between 1907 (the year Boots opened on the corner of Norroy Rd) and 1914, and there would appear to be mannequins in the window of no. 147 - tending to confirm that it was by then part of the Doland chain. Putney Post Office, on the corner of Disraeli Rd, opened in 1874 and remained there



until 1961, when it moved to Upper Richmond Rd. It is interesting to note that, for the 1904 postcard, the photographer was able to stand in the middle of the High St, with nothing worse than horses to worry about. If only one were able to do that today - and believe me, the author has tried!



## Tony Robert Judt Historian: 1948-2010

### The Putney Years!

Tony Judt was a British historian, essayist and university professor, specialising in European history and was Erich Maria Remarque [*All Quiet on the Western Front*] Professor in European Studies at NY University and Director of NYU's Erich Maria Remarque Institute. A frequent contributor to the New York Review of Books, he was elected a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts & Sciences in 1996 and, in 2007, a corresponding Fellow of the British Academy. In 2008, he was diagnosed with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), aka Lou Gehrig's Disease (related to motor neurone disease) and from October 2009, he was paralyzed from the neck down. He died of ALS at his home in Manhattan on 6<sup>th</sup> August 2010.

Judt was raised in South London by a mother whose parents had emigrated from the Russian Empire and a father born in Belgium, who emigrated as a boy to Ireland, then England. He was educated at Emanuel School in Battersea, before going on to study as a scholarship student at King's College Cambridge. From 1952 to 1958, the family lived in a flat at 92 Putney High Street, above the hairdressing shop where his parents worked - currently Claire's, between Santander/Halifax and Clarks.



In *The Memory Chalet* (published by Heinemann on 4<sup>th</sup> November), an extract from which was printed in the (national) Guardian in August just eight days after his death, he reminisces on his life as a child in Putney, which he later realised was 'a good place to grow up in', whilst remarking that 'there was something austere about Putney itself.' He was impressed by the multitude of buses (of which he had a close-up view from the flat, which 'afforded me a privileged if noisy perch'), including the 14, which he took to school.

'Our ... flat was chilly and uninspiring, rising three storeys above the hairdressing shop where my parents worked. But it [backed] on to Jones Mews, one of the last of the stable alleys where the

residents and tradesmen of the town had kept their animals. In those years the mews still served its original function: two of the six stables in the alley leading away from our back door were occupied by working animals. One of these - a bedraggled, skinny apology for a horse - slaved for a rag-and-bone man, who would drag it out of its stall each morning, shove it carelessly between the shafts and head out to collect what ... was often a substantial haul. The other fared better, working for a blowsy, chatty flower lady who had a stall on the common. The [rest] had been converted into sheds for local artisans: electricians, mechanics and general handymen. Like the milkman, the butcher, the flower lady and the rag-and-bone man, these were locals, children of locals and beyond. From the perspective of Jones Mews, Putney was still a village.

'Even the high street was still rooted in a self-contained past. There were already, of course, "chain stores": Woolworths, Marks & Spencer, British Home Stores etc. But these were small outlets and far outnumbered by locally owned shops selling haberdashery, tobacco, books, groceries, shoes, [clothing etc]. Even the "multiples" were somehow local: Sainsbury's, a small store with just one double-window, still had sawdust on its floor. You were served by polite, slightly haughty assistants in starched blue-and-white aprons, resembling nothing so much as the proud employees in the photograph on the back wall, showing the little shop on the day it opened many decades before. The Home & Colonial ... carefully distinguished between its overseas and home-grown supplies: "New Zealand lamb", "English beef" and so on.

'But the high street was my mother's territory. I shopped in Lacy Road, which boasted an off-licence, where I was [sent] for cider and wine, a small tailor's [shop] and two "sweet shops". One was modern, at least by 50s standards, offering fruit gums, packaged chocolate and chewing gum. But the other - darker, danker, dirtier and depressing - was more intriguing. It was run ... by a shrivelled, mean-spirited old crone who would resentfully weigh out from an array of [jars] a quarter-pound of gob-stoppers or liquorice while grumbling at the impatience and sartorial [state] of her customers: "I've been serving grubby little boys like you since the old queen's jubilee, so don't try to fool me!" By whom, of course, she meant Victoria, whose jubilee had been celebrated in Putney in June 1887.'



Mr Ken Barbour, an experienced and senior museums manager, has been appointed as head

of *Wandsworth Museum*, London's newest museum. The announcement by the Board of Trustees came in the wake of the resignation of Andrew Leitch, the first director, on health grounds. Mr Barbour was responsible in recent months for establishing and implementing the operations of the new museum. He will develop a full programme of events for the coming year, building on the launch programme established by Andrew, which culminated in the official opening by the Rt. Hon. Jeremy Hunt MP, Secretary of State for Culture, Olympics, Media & Sport, and Boris Johnson, Mayor of London, on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2010; also present was the Leader of the Council, Cllr. Edward Lister.

### History

Putney Lodge, a late-Georgian mansion on the new museum site, was the home of Sigismund Rücker, a Wandsworth-born broker with a keen interest in natural history. Behind it were several large glass-houses, in which he raised rare orchids, and he frequently corresponded with Charles Darwin. He died in 1882 and his brother, Herman, sold Putney Lodge in 1884. In 1885, it became the first public library south of the Thames in London. From its inception, it was a huge success and an extension was soon built, housing displays of local interest, including locally found artefacts and natural history specimens.



In 1906, Wandsworth's first official museum opened at the Plough Road Institute, Battersea, which it shared with a gymnasium, recreation room and public slipper baths. The Institute had been opened to compete with the attraction of local public houses, of which there were 91 within a ½ mile radius! It was hoped, said the Mayor at the opening ceremony, "that the local public, in a spare half-hour, could find some little exhibits there which would improve their mind and give them some idea as to how Battersea had progressed."

The museum was popular but seems to have had little to do with Battersea or Wandsworth, featuring as it did a cornucopia of objects from around the world. The idea of a museum of local history had not yet become reality. Sadly, this closed at the beginning of the First World War. A second one was opened by Battersea Borough Council in 1927 but contained little of the material from Plough Road. It was housed in the old reference library at Battersea District Library [see photo in LH column below], though the collection was apparently every bit as eccentric as the earlier ones.

When the new museum was launched at Putney Library in Disraeli Road in 1986, some 40 years after the last local museum in Battersea closed its doors, its purpose was clear - to exhibit items which would tell the history of Wandsworth and its people.

In 1990, thanks to a large grant, the museum moved to a new site in the Old Court House on Garratt Lane. This



popular facility featured objects from its collections, plus artefacts borrowed from the Wandsworth Historical Society and the Museum of London, flourishing until its closure in 2007. A new body was formed the same year and, primarily by virtue of the extraordinary generosity of the Hintze Foundation, it was able to resurrect the *Wandsworth Museum* on the site of the former West Hill Library [above L and below].



With the aid of the earlier collections, it is now once again able to share the long and fascinating history of Wandsworth with the people of the borough and beyond. We wish it every success and hope that Society members and Wandsworth residents will continue to support this invaluable local facility.